

2008 Kids & Family Reading Report™

Reading in the 21st Century: Turning the Page with Technology



Yankelovich



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Key Findings

In 2008, Scholastic and Yankelovich conducted a survey to examine the factors shaping children's relationship with reading now, and as we progress through the 21st century.

The key findings of the research, based on interviews with 501 children age 5-17 and their parents or guardians (1000+ total respondents) in 25 cities across the country, are as follows:

KIDS & READING

- **A majority of kids say they like to read books for fun** and that reading books for fun is important. Most kids perceive a correlation between reading and success.
- **One in four kids age 5–17 reads books for fun every day** (high frequency reader), and more than half of kids read books for fun at least two to three times a week.
- Reading frequency declines after age eight and is stronger among girls than boys.

TECHNOLOGY & READING

- **Kids believe that technology will complement — not replace — book reading.** After age eight, more children go online daily than read for fun daily; however, high frequency Internet users are still more likely than lower frequency users to read books for fun every day.*
- **The majority of kids of all ages (62%) prefer to read books printed on paper** rather than on a computer or handheld device.
- **Nearly two in three online tweens and teens (age 9-17) have extended the reading experience via the Internet.** These kids are more likely to value and enjoy reading, read more frequently, and agree with the statement: "No matter what I can do online, I'll always want to read books printed on paper."

PARENTS' ROLE

- **Parents overwhelmingly view reading as the most important skill a child needs to develop.**
- **Trouble finding books they like is a key reason kids say they do not read more frequently.** Mom is the top source for book suggestions for kids age 5-11, and friends are most influential among kids age 12-17, who also turn to the Internet.
- **Eighty-two percent of parents say they wish their child would read more books for fun**, and parents employ several tactics to encourage kids to read more.

Notes: *High frequency online children are children age 5-8 who go online every day or almost every day and children age 9-17 who go online every day. Low frequency online kids are online kids who do not fall into the "high" group.

Study Implications

1. Parents and teachers should take note that despite kids' involvement with technology, kids hold reading books in high regard.

- Kids still embrace the printed book.
- Kids need opportunities to choose their own books.

2. Parents and teachers can leverage kids' interest in technology to spark a greater interest in reading books.

- Kids can extend the book experience online through fan sites, message boards, author sites, etc.
- Kids can connect with classmates and friends online around books.
- Kids can search for and sample books online.

3. Parents own reading behavior can influence kids' reading relationships.

- Parents can increase their own reading frequency and serve as a reading role model for kids.
- Parents can continue to read to or with their kids beyond the early elementary school years.
- Parents can help kids find books that resonate with them, especially after age eight when reading frequency declines.

I. Kids & Reading

Kids value reading for fun – one in four kids age 5-17 reads books for fun every day, and more than half of kids read books for fun at least two to three times a week.

- Kids' reading relationship involves believing in the importance of reading, enjoying reading, and the act of reading, and these three are all interconnected.
- Kids of all ages see a correlation between reading and success.
- Kids reading frequency declines after age eight. Boys and older teens (age 15-17) have weaker reading relationships than do girls and younger children — both attitudinally and behaviorally.
- Most kids say there are not enough really good books for boys/girls their age, and they say finding books they like is one of the key reasons they do not read for fun more frequently.
- Parents underestimate the degree to which kids have trouble finding books they like.
- Mom is the top source for book suggestions for kids age 5-11, and friends are most influential among kids age 12-17, who also turn to the Internet.
- Kids like choosing their own books — 89% say their favorite books are the ones they picked out themselves.

Kids' Reading Relationship Is Based on Three Interconnected Dynamics

- There is an extremely strong relationship among the three dynamics of reading importance, reading enjoyment, and reading behavior.
- Kids who are higher on one measure are higher on all measures, and kids who are lower on one measure are lower on all measures
- For example:
 - High frequency readers are **five times more likely** than low frequency readers to say reading is extremely or very important (94% vs. 18%).
 - Kids who think reading is extremely important are more than **four times more likely** than those who think reading is a little or not important to love or like reading a lot (96% vs. 22%).
 - Kids who think reading is extremely important are **ten times more likely** than kids who think reading is a little or not important to be high frequency readers (53% vs. 5%).

READING IMPORTANCE	Among High Frequency Readers	Among Low Frequency Readers
	(140)	(98)
Degree to which child believes reading for fun is important: Extremely/Very important	94%	18%

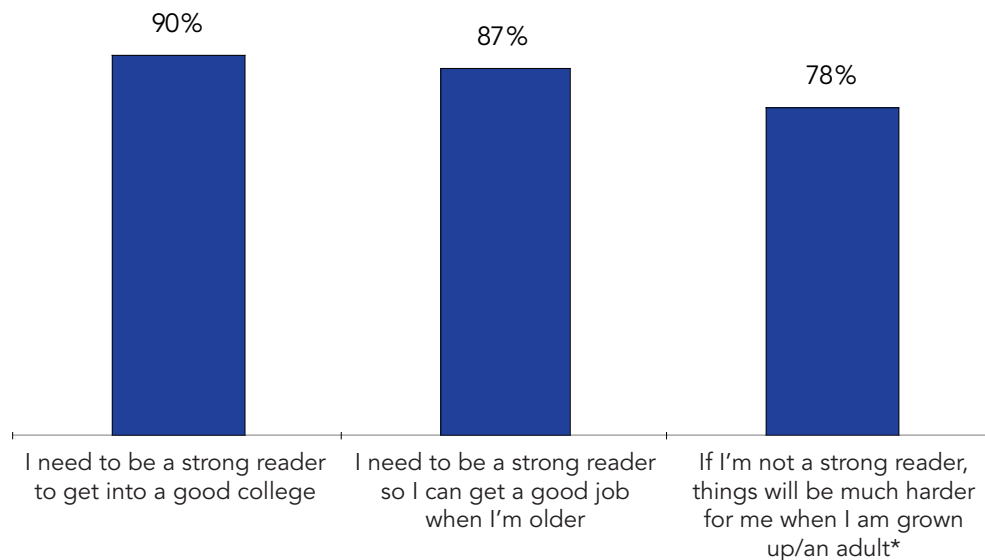
READING ENJOYMENT	Among Kids Who Think Reading Is Extremely Important	Among Kids Who Think Reading Is A Little/Not Important
	(158)	(141)
Degree to which child enjoys reading for fun: Love it/Like it a lot	96%	22%

READING BEHAVIOR	Among Kids Who Think Reading Is Extremely Important	Among Kids Who Think Reading Is A Little/Not Important
	(158)	(141)
Frequency of reading books for fun: High	53%	5%

Children Understand that Reading Is a Prerequisite for Success

- About nine in ten kids agree that they need to be strong readers to get into a good college and to get a good job.
- Three in four agree that things will be “much harder” when they are grown if they are not strong readers.
- These sentiments do not vary significantly according to a child’s age or gender.

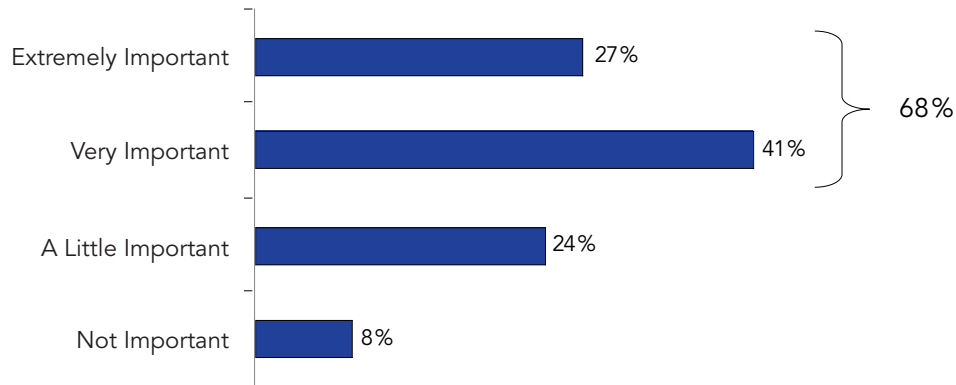
% of Kids Who Agree with Each Statement



Notes: *For children 5-8, the statement used the term “grown up,” all others saw the term “an adult.”

A Majority of Children Believe Reading for Fun Is “Extremely” or “Very” Important

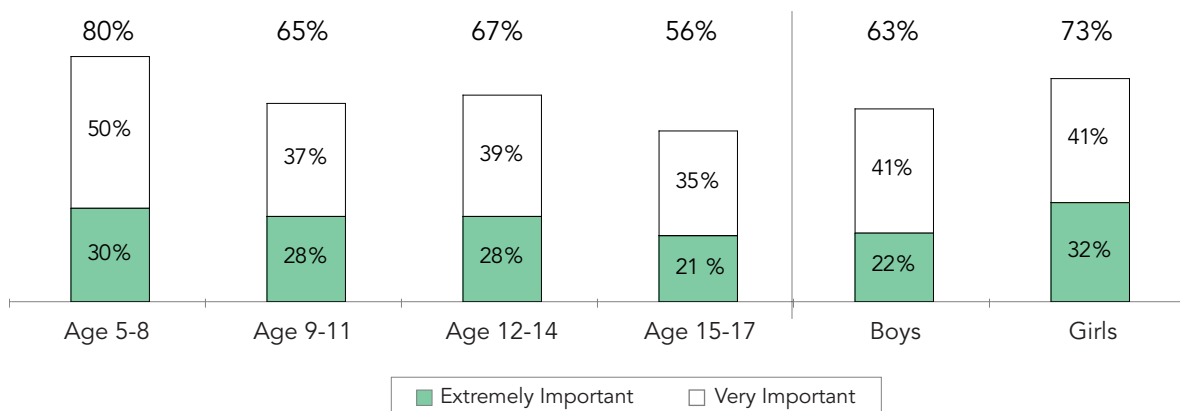
How Important Kids Think It Is to Read Books for Fun



Belief in Reading Importance Declines with Age and Is Weaker among Boys

- Eighty percent of 5-8 year old children think reading for fun is extremely or very important. This drops to 65% among kids age 9-11 and drops again among 15-17s.

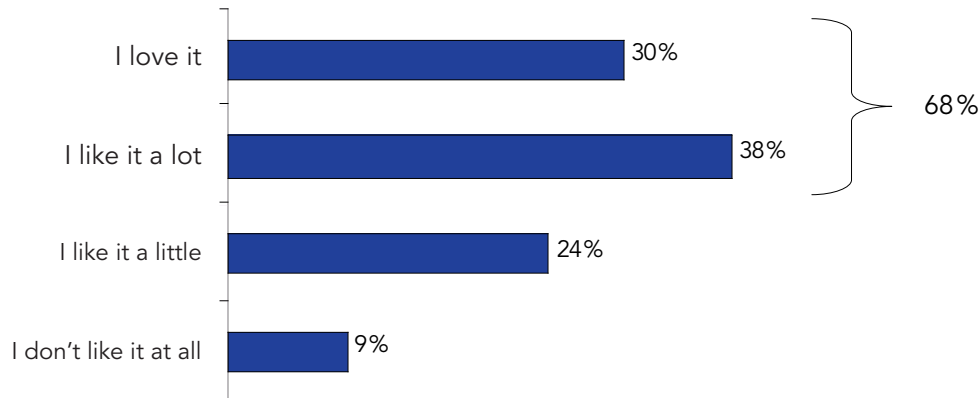
Extremely/Very important combined:



Notes: “Reading for fun” was defined in the first question of this study as: “This means reading books that are not part of your schoolwork or homework, and could mean reading by yourself or with a parent.”

Similarly, a Majority Say They either “Love” or “Like” Reading for Fun “A Lot”

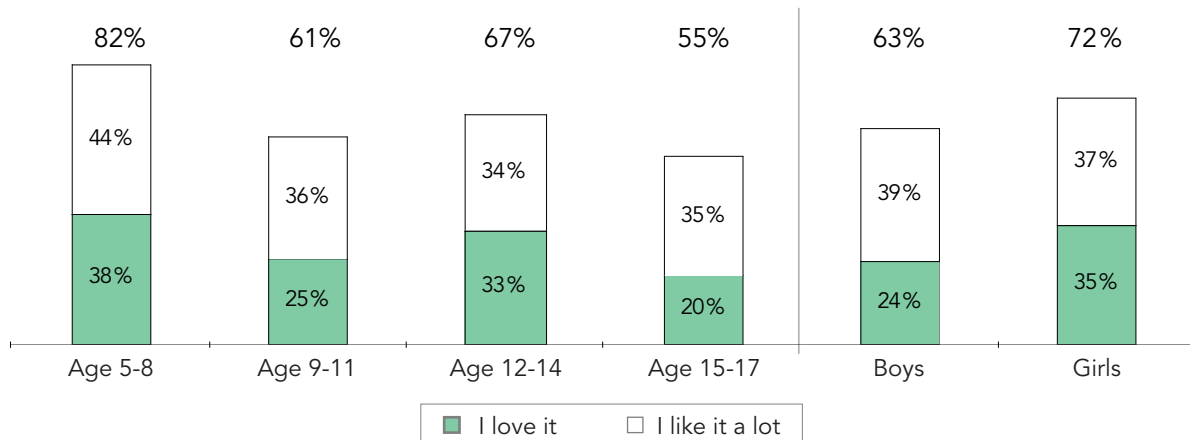
How Much Children Enjoy Reading Books for Fun



Reading Enjoyment Also Declines with Age, and Boys Trail Girls

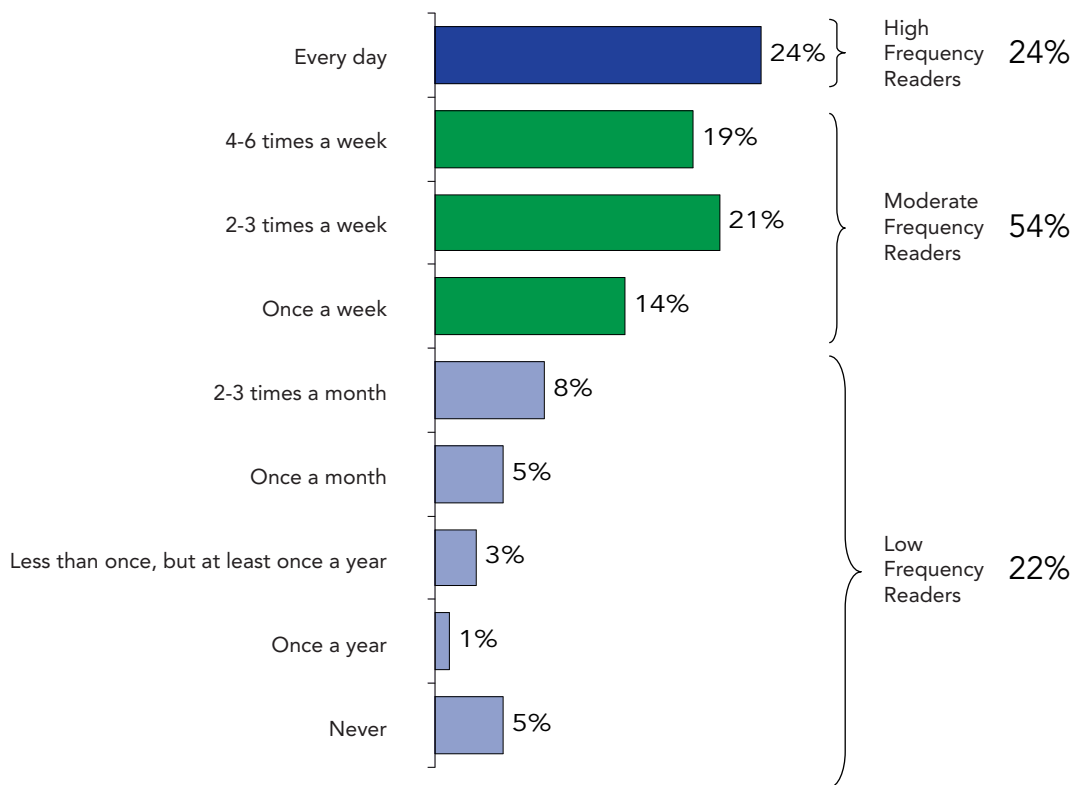
- Just over eight in ten 5-8 year old children say they love reading or like it a lot. This drops among all other age groups.

Love/Like It a Lot combined:



One in Four Children Reads Books for Fun Every Day, and More Than Half of All Kids Read Books for Fun at Least Two to Three Times a Week

Frequency with Which Children Read Books for Fun



Notes: Throughout this report, when "reading" is mentioned, children age 5-8 were typically asked in their in-person interview if they "read or looked at" a book.

Children age 5-8 selected their initial response from the following options: "Every day," "Once a week," "Once a month," or "Never." Children 5-8 who chose "Every day" or "Once a week" were then asked a follow up question which allowed them the additional choice of "Almost every day" or "2 to 3 times per week." All other children selected their responses from the full list of options displayed in the above chart.

Frequency of Reading Books for Fun Declines with Age

- Daily reading declines after age eight. Three in ten 5-8 year olds are high frequency readers – a higher percentage than any other age group.
- Children age 9-11 and 12-14 are three times more likely to be low frequency readers than are children age 5-8 (8% vs. 24%). That is, they are three times more likely to be reading books for fun less than once a week.
- Among teens age 15-17, nearly four in ten (37%) read books for fun less than once a week.
- Additionally, while boys and girls are equally likely to be high frequency readers, boys are more likely than girls to be low frequency readers (25% vs. 18%).

Frequency with Which Children Read Books for Fun

	Total Kids	Age 5-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17	Boys	Girls
	(501)	(158)	(114)	(151)	(78)	(250)	(251)
High Frequency Readers	24%	30%	22%	23%	17%	24%	23%
Moderate Frequency Readers	54%	62%	54%	54%	46%	51%	58%
Low Frequency Readers	22%	8%	24%	23%	37%	25%	18%

Notes: Reader groups are defined as: High = Reads every day; Moderate = Reads almost every day (5-8s) or 4-6 times a week (9-17s) to once a week; Low = Reads less than once a week to never.

Weekly Readership of Books and Other Materials Varies by Age

- When other kinds of reading materials are considered, on a weekly basis:
 - Teens – especially older teens – are more likely than younger kids to read magazines.
 - Older teens are more likely to read magazines than books.

Past Week Reading Activities

	Total Kids (501)	Age 5-8 (158)	Age 9-11 (114)	Age 12-14 (151)	Age 15-17 (78)
Read a book not required for school	59%	65%	53%	61%	54%
Read a book required for school*	58%	57%	65%	58%	53%
Read a magazine from school or home	49%	43%	36%	51%	65%
Read a comic book	30%	40%	22%	24%	30%
Read a newspaper	27%	21%	22%	27%	38%

- High and moderate frequency readers are far more likely to read books than other printed materials.
- Low frequency readers are far more likely to read magazines than books or other printed materials.

	High Frequency Readers (140)	Moderate Frequency Readers (263)	Low Frequency Readers (98)
Read a book not required for school	77%	70%	10%
Read a book required for school*	55%	65%	44%
Read a magazine from school or home	53%	45%	53%
Read a comic book	36%	33%	15%
Read a newspaper	35%	27%	17%
% of kids who have NOT read any of the above items in the past week	2%	2%	21%

Notes: *To ensure that children were not including reading textbooks, they saw: "(remember: don't include reading a textbook!)" in the response item.

Kids age 9-17 also saw "please do not select an activity if you did this online only" in the question text. It can be assumed that very few 5-8 year olds would have engaged in these reading activities only online.

Despite the Abundance of Information, Half of All Children Think There Are Not Enough “Really Good” Books from Which to Choose

- This sentiment holds fairly steady with age.

“There aren’t enough really good books for boys/girls my age.”

55%

Total Agree among Kids



Notes: Children were asked about their own gender.

Trouble Finding Books They Like Is a Key Reason Kids Age 9-17 Do Not Read More Books for Fun

- Kids' reasons for not reading more books for fun are multiple and extend far beyond losing "share-of-time" to other activities.
- Among children age 9-17, "having trouble finding books that I like" is among the top reasons for not reading more books for fun.
- Only 15% of kids say they do not read for fun more because they "don't like to read."

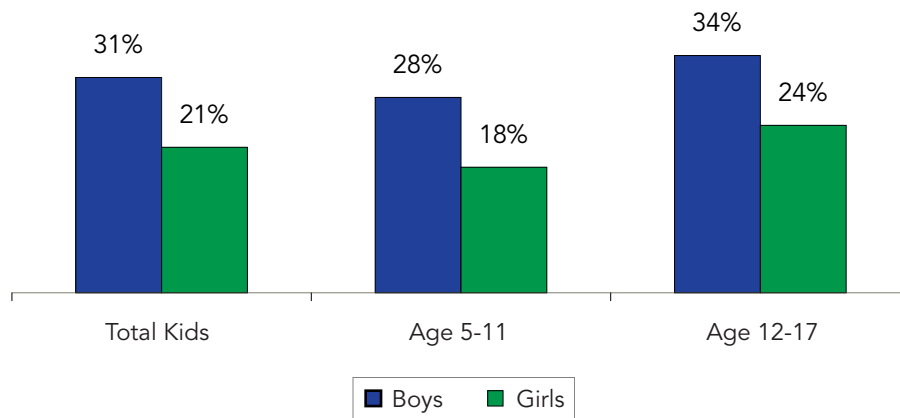
Reasons Why Kids Say They Are Not Reading More Books for Fun

	Total Kids	Age 5-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17
	(501)	(158)	(114)	(151)	(78)
I would rather do other things	31%	27%	35%	36%	31%
I have too much schoolwork and homework	27%	21%	37%	32%	20%
I have trouble finding books that I like	26%	15%	34%	32%	27%
I read other things like magazines, newspapers, or online articles	19%	9%	17%	28%	25%
I already read enough books	19%	20%	12%	22%	20%
I don't have time to read	18%	6%	11%	20%	37%
I don't like to read	15%	10%	20%	10%	19%
I'm often too tired to read	14%	9%	14%	12%	23%
Reading is not cool	9%	7%	11%	5%	14%
I don't read that well	9%	13%	11%	7%	4%

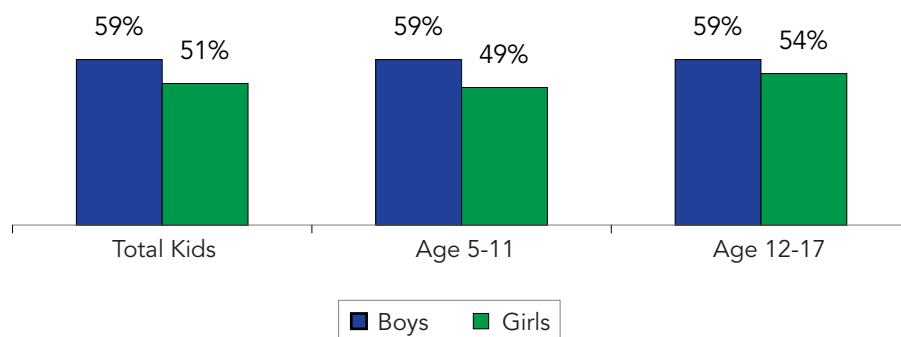
Notes: Children could choose as many as apply.

Boys Are More Likely than Girls to Have Trouble Finding Books They Like

Reasons Why Kids Are Not Reading More:
I have trouble finding books that I like



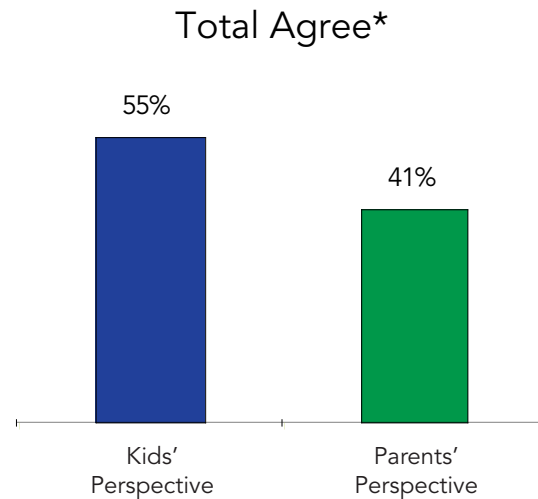
There aren't enough really good books for boys/girls my age*



Notes: *Children were asked about their own gender.

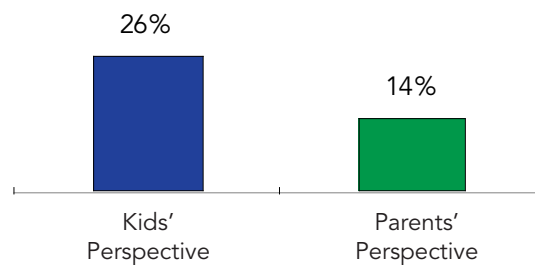
Parents Underestimate the Degree to Which Kids Struggle to Find Books

- Only 41% of parents (vs. 55% of kids) say there are not enough really good books for children of their child's age and gender.



- Kids are nearly twice as likely as their parents (26% vs. 14%) to say having trouble finding books they like is a reason kids do not read more books for fun.

Reasons Why Kids Are Not Reading More**



Notes: *The attribute kids responded to read, "There aren't enough really good books for boys/girls my age." The attribute the parents responded to read, "There aren't enough really good books for boys/girls my child's age."

**The attribute kids responded to read, "I have trouble finding books that I like." The attribute the parents responded to read, "He/She has trouble finding books that [he/she] likes."

Children Who Struggle to Find Books They Like Have Far Weaker Reading Relationships than Other Kids

- All three elements of the reading relationship suffer among kids who identify having “trouble finding books I like” as a reason they do not read more books for fun.
 - They are far less likely to believe reading books for fun is important (48% vs. 75%).
 - They are far less likely to believe reading books for fun is enjoyable (48% vs. 74%).
 - They are less likely to be high frequency readers (16% vs. 26%) and are less likely to read daily or even almost daily (29% vs. 48%).

	Total Kids (501)	Having trouble finding books is a reason for not reading more (126)	Having trouble finding books is not a reason for <u>not</u> reading more (375)
READING IMPORTANCE			
Say it is extremely or very important to read books for fun	68%	48%	75%
READING ENJOYMENT			
Degree to which child enjoys reading for fun: Love it/Like it a lot	67%	48%	74%
READING BEHAVIOR			
High frequency reader (read books for fun everyday)	24%	16%	26%
Read books for fun everyday/almost everyday	43%	29%	48%

Options Abound When It Comes to Sources of Information on Books to Read for Fun

- Mom tops the list of people or places from which children get ideas about which books to read for fun, closely followed by friends and teachers.

People/Places from Which Kids Get Ideas about Which Books to Read for Fun

	Total Kids (501)
Mom	65%
Friends	61%
Teachers	57%
Library or librarian	48%
Dad	43%
Book store or other kind of store	41%
School book fairs (where a book sale is held at school for a few days)	40%
Television shows	34%
The Internet	32%
Grandparents	31%
Brothers or sisters	28%
Other people in my family	28%
School book clubs or the book order forms teachers hand out in school	28%
Magazines or newspapers	27%
None of these	2%

Notes: Children could choose as many as apply.

Mom Is a Key Go-To Source among 5-11s, Friends Rank Higher among 12-17s

- Among children age 5-8, mom is influential among far more children than any other source.
- Among kids age 9-11, friends gain ground and are actually the most common source of information among kids age 12-14 and 15-17.
- Children age 15-17 use the Internet as a source for information on books more so than any other age group.

People/Places from Which Kids Get Ideas about Books to Read for Fun

Kids Age 5-8 (158)		Kids Age 9-11 (114)	
Mom	81%	Mom	70%
Teachers	59%	Friends	62%
Dad	57%	Teachers	56%
Friends	51%	School book fairs	53%
Library or librarian	49%	Library or librarian	52%
Grandparents	42%	Book store or other kind of store	44%
School book fairs	40%	Dad	37%
Book store or other kind of store	36%	School book clubs/book order forms	36%
Television shows	32%	Television shows	33%
Brothers or sisters	30%	Brothers or sisters	31%

Kids Age 12-14 (151)		Kids Age 15-17 (78)	
Friends	73%	Friends	59%
Teachers	61%	Teachers	51%
Mom	58%	The Internet	51%
School book fairs	48%	Mom	46%
Book store or other kind of store	48%	Library or librarian	42%
Library or librarian	47%	Book store or other kind of store	38%
Dad	40%	Television shows	37%
The Internet	40%	Magazines or newspapers	35%
Magazines or newspapers	34%	Dad	34%
Television shows	33%	Brothers or sisters	24%

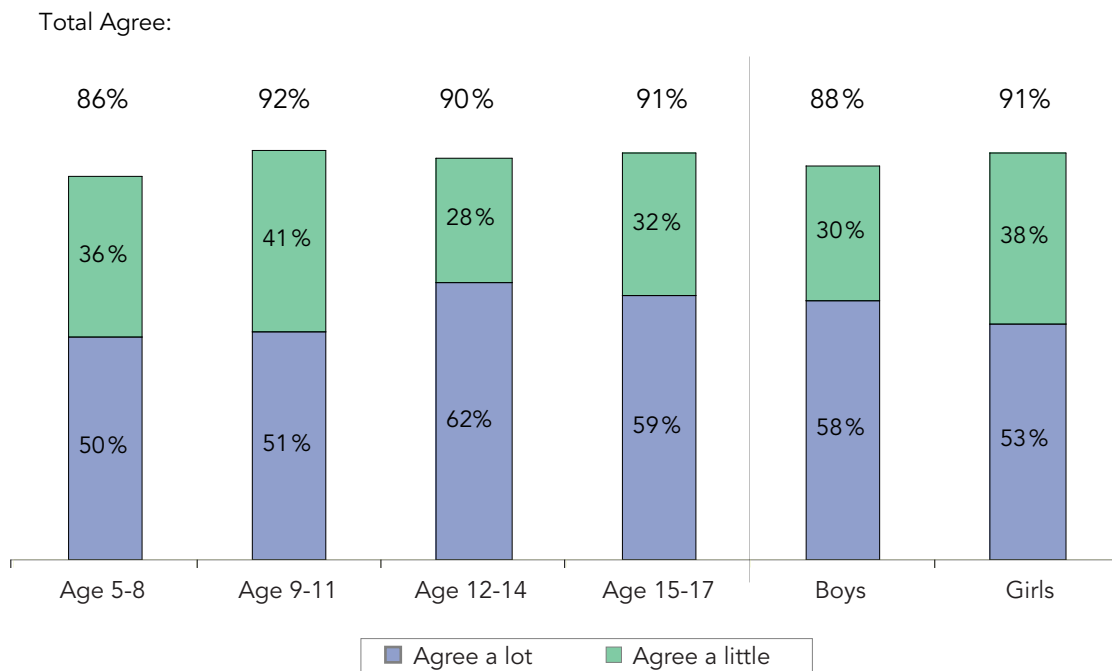
Notes: Top ten items for each group are shown.

Kids Like Choosing Their Own Books

**“My favorite books are the ones
I picked out myself.”**

89%

Total Agree among Kids



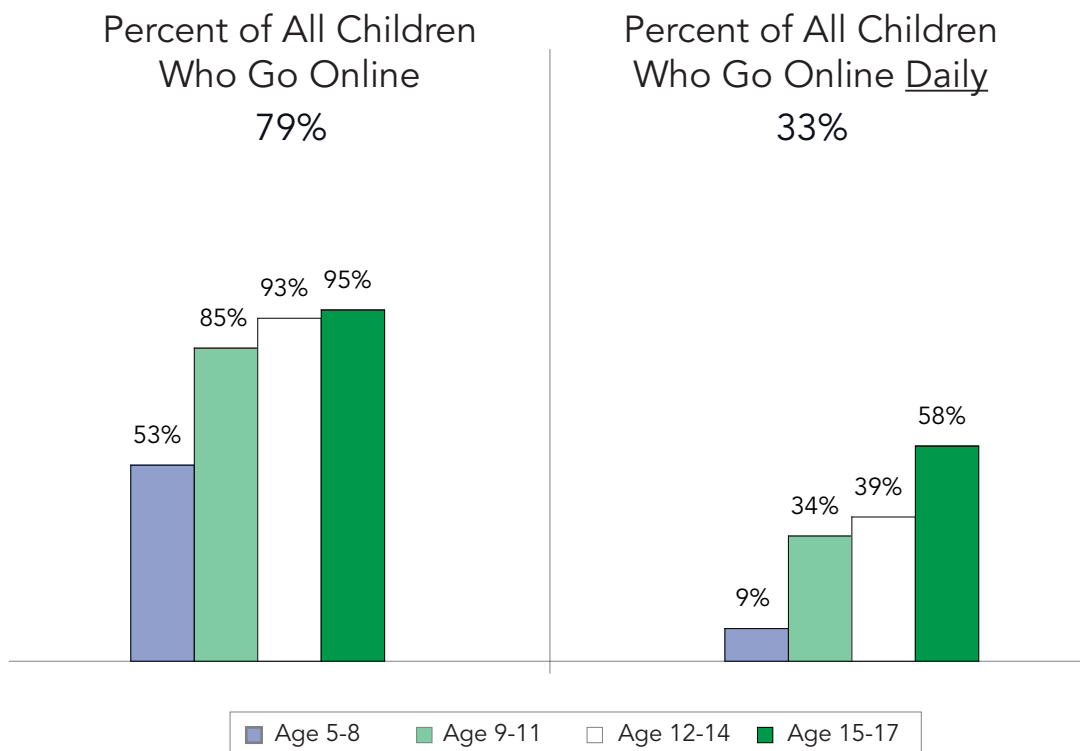
II. Technology and the Printed Book

Kids anticipate and embrace a range of possibilities when it comes to reading in the 21st century and believe that technology will complement – not replace – reading the printed book.

- After age eight, more children go online daily than read books for fun daily.
- This does not mean, however, that online use directly replaces daily book reading for fun. In fact, high frequency Internet users are more likely than lower frequency users to read a book for fun every day.
- Looking towards the future, children of all ages anticipate new modes of reading and new kinds of reading-related activities that will only be possible through digital or online reading.
- Two thirds of kids age 9-17 believe that within the next 10 years, most books which are read for fun will be read digitally – either on a computer or on another kind of electronic device. Eighty-seven percent of kids think people will be able to tag and share their favorite parts of books with others.
- By nearly a two to one margin, kids age 9-17 say they prefer reading books to reading online when engaging their imagination; girls' preference for book reading over Internet reading is stronger than boys'.
- Three quarters of kids of all ages agree that "no matter what I can do online, I'll always want to read books printed on paper."

Many Children Are Introduced to the Internet Early

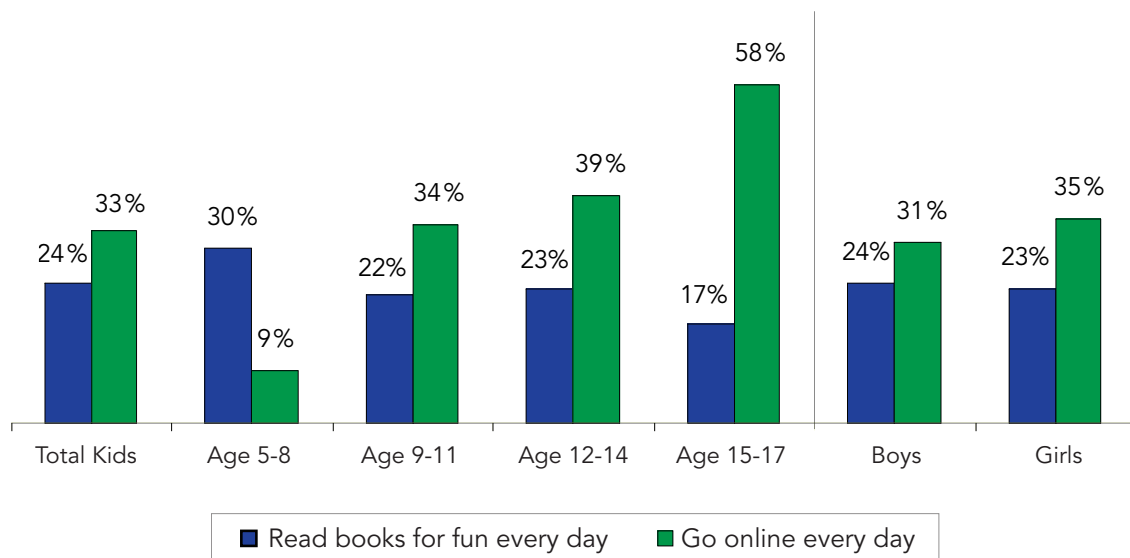
- After age eleven, nearly all children use the Internet.
- Even 85% of 9-11 year olds and just over half of 5-8 year olds go online.
- Daily Internet use grows dramatically from childhood, to adolescence, to the teen years.



After Age Eight, More Children Go Online Daily than Read Books for Fun Daily

- Among kids age 5-8, three in ten read books daily and only 9% go online daily. But among total 9-11s, 22% read books for fun daily and 34% go online daily.
- Among 15-17 year olds, daily book reading decreases to 17% and daily Internet use increases to 58%.

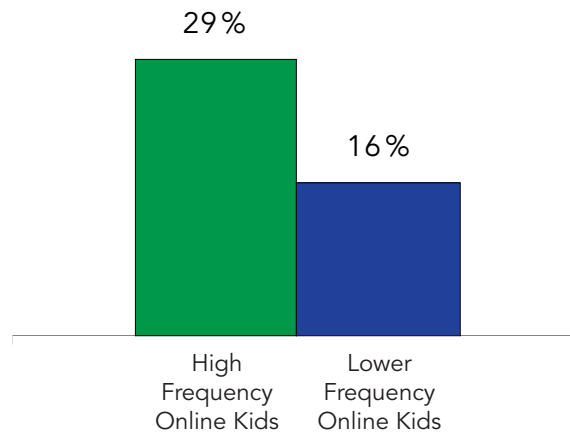
Percent of Kids in Each Group Who Read Books for Fun Daily Compared to Go Online Daily



Daily Online Use Does Not Necessarily Replace Daily Book Reading for Fun

- High frequency Internet users are **more likely** than lower frequency Internet users to read a book for fun every day.

Percent of Kids in Each Group Who Are High Frequency Readers



- High frequency Internet users are just as likely, in most instances, as lower frequency Internet users to be reading books and other reading materials each week.

Reading Activities in Which Kids Have Participated in Past Week

	High Frequency Online Kids (185)	Lower Frequency Online Kids (200)
Read a book not required for school	63%	55%
Read a book required for school	56%	63%
Read a magazine from school or home	55%	51%
Read a comic book	28%	27%
Read a newspaper	33%	29%

Notes: High frequency online children are children age 5-8 who go online every day or almost every day and children age 9-17 who go online every day. Low frequency online kids are online kids who do not fall into the "high" group.

More Than 60% of Kids Say Reading Books Is Better Than Reading on the Internet When Using Their Imagination

- Girls are more likely to believe that books are better when they want to use their imagination, when they want to become so absorbed in a book that they lose track of time, and when they simply want to read for fun.
- Boys are more likely to say the Internet is better when they want to read for fun.

Among 9-17s: Instances When It Might Be Better to Read Books vs. Read Things on the Internet

	Total Age 9-17s (343)	Boys Age 9-17 (174)	Girls Age 9-17 (169)
If you wanted to read things that make you use your imagination, which would be better?			
Read books	63%	59%	68%
Read things on the Internet	37%	41%	32%
If you wanted to become so involved in what you are reading that you lose track of time, which would be better?			
Read books	57%	51%	63%
Read things on the Internet	43%	49%	37%
If you want to read for fun, which would be better?			
Read books	54%	46%	63%
Read things on the Internet	46%	54%	37%
If you wanted to read about people and characters that inspire you, which would be better?			
Read books	50%	48%	52%
Read things on the Internet	50%	52%	48%
If you wanted to get a long-lasting understanding of things or topics you are interested in, which would be better?			
Read books	49%	49%	48%
Read things on the Internet	51%	51%	52%

Notes: Kids age 5-8 were not asked this question.

Kids Readily Envision a Future Where Book Reading and Technology Merge and Complement One Another

- Kids embrace the notion that reading online will become a gateway to social activities, including sharing thoughts and feelings, playing games, and extending the reading experience more generally.
- Fully two in three children believe that within the next 10 years, most books which are read for fun will be read digitally – either on a computer or on another kind of electronic device.
- ***These beliefs generally hold true regardless of age, gender, or the frequency with which a child goes online.***

Things That Will Be True within the Next 10 Years

	Total Kids Age 9-17 (343)
When reading a book online, people will be able to tag and share their favorite parts and their thoughts about the book with other people who are online.	87%
Books on the Internet will have links to different kinds of things like games, websites, and other people's opinions.	86%
When reading a book on a computer or other electronic device, people will be able to type notes to themselves and highlight their favorite parts in the book.	81%
Just like a music playlist on an iPod, people will have all their favorite books stored electronically on a computer or another electronic device. It will be like a personal electronic library.	77%
When people read for fun, they will read most books on a computer or on some other kind of electronic device.	66%
Books will have secret codes and links to websites where people can join virtual worlds.	63%

Notes: Kids age 5-8 were not asked the question shown on this page.

Some Children Already Have Experience with Digital Reading

- About 40% of children age 12-17 have read a digital book in the past year, as have one in four 9-11 year olds and 15% of 5-8s.

Reading Platforms Used in Past Year

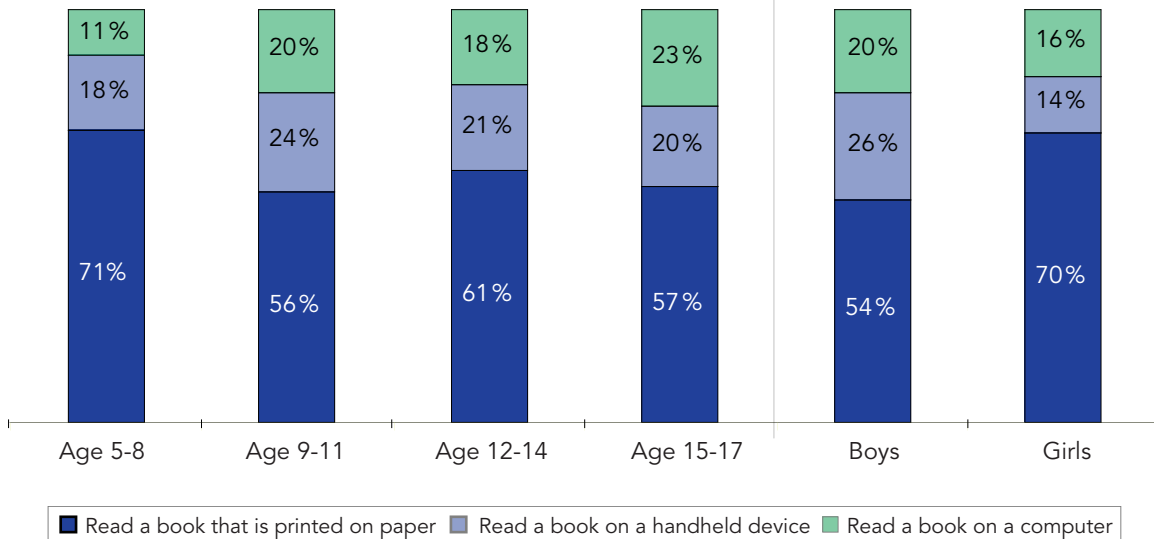
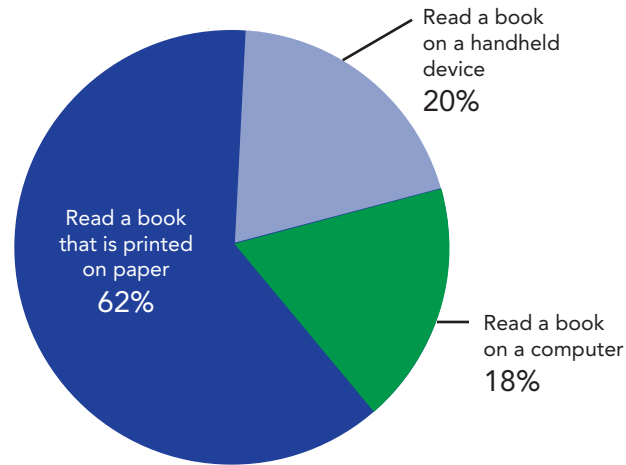
	Total Kids (501)	Age 5-8 (158)	Age 9-11 (114)	Age 12-14 (151)	Age 15-17 (78)
Read a digital book in past year (Net)	29%	15%	25%	40%	41%
Read a book on a computer	24%	12%	19%	31%	37%
Read a book on a handheld device*	12%	6%	11%	18%	14%
Read or sampled parts of a book on a website like Amazon.com	18%	10%	16%	18%	31%

Notes: *Full response option for "handheld device" was "Read a book on a handheld device like a portable ebook reader, iPhone, iPod touch, PSP, Blackberry, or other things like that."

Bottom Line: Interest in Digital Reading Is Strong, but Printed Books Hold Sway

- When asked which one platform kids think they would prefer to use to read a book, six in ten say a printed book.

Which One Thing Do You Think You Would Prefer?
(Among Total Children)



Notes: Full response option for "handheld device" was "Read a book on a handheld device like a portable ebook reader, iPhone, iPod touch, PSP, Blackberry, or other things like that."

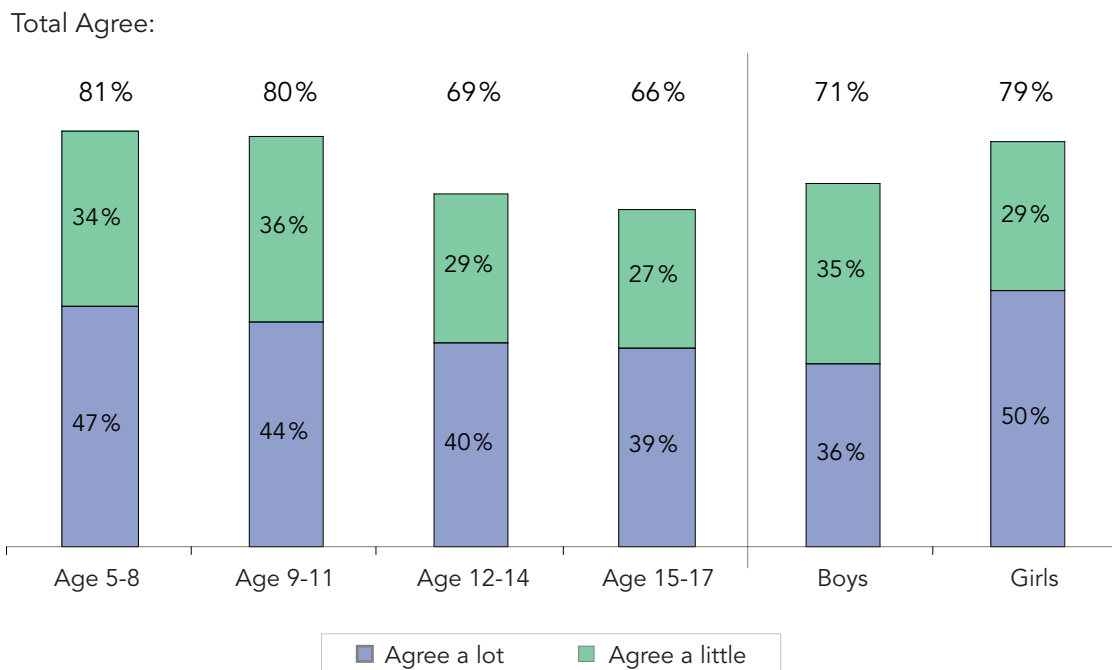
Children Say They Will Always Want Printed Books

- When it comes to agreeing to the statement: “No matter what I can do online, I’ll always want to read books printed on paper,” some differences between groups of children emerge.
 - Teens are less likely than younger kids to agree with this statement.
 - Boys are less likely than girls to agree.

“No matter what I can do online, I’ll always want to read books printed on paper.”

75%

Total Agree Among Kids



III. The Internet: An Extension of Reading

Teens and tweens age 9-17 extend the reading experience via the Internet.

- Nearly two-thirds of kids 9-17 who are Internet users have extended the reading experience online — from looking for more books by the same author, to visiting websites that immerse a child in content related to a book, to connecting with authors and other readers.
- Kids who extend the reading experience online are more likely than those who do not to value reading, enjoy reading and read books for fun more often.
- Both boys and girls who are online reading extenders are engaged in learning new things about books and authors and connecting with other readers online.
- Kids who are actively extending the reading experience online are far more likely to say, “No matter what I can do online, I’ll always want to read books printed on paper.”
- Low frequency readers are far more likely to say they prefer to read things online than to read books.

The Internet Facilitates Engagement with Reading

- Nearly two in three online tweens and teens have extended the reading experience via the Internet.
- Girls are slightly more likely than boys to be Online Reading Extenders (68% vs. 60%).

Online Reading Extenders Are...

...the 64% of online kids age 9-17 who have participated in at least one activity that extends the reading experience online*

(This constitutes 58% of total kids age 9-17.)

Notes: *See table on the next page for details on specific activities used to define "Online Reading Extenders." Children age 5-8 were not asked about the full list of activities that define "Online Reading Extenders" – therefore, this analysis focuses on kids age 9-17.

The Internet Facilitates Engagement with Reading

- Many children are extending the book reading experience online — from looking for more books in a series or by the same author, to visiting websites that immerse a child in content related to a book, to connecting with authors and other readers.

Ways in Which Online Children Extend the Reading Experience on the Internet

	Online Children Age...			
	Total Age 9-17s	9-11	12-14	15-17
	(385)	(95)	(138)	(73)
% engaged in any activity shown on the table	64%	65%	58%	68%
Looked on the Internet for a book in the same series	37%	43%	33%	45%
Looked on the Internet for a book by the same author	30%	23%	39%	34%
Gone to a book's website or an author's website	27%	22%	23%	35%
Gone to websites with videos about the book or author	18%	13%	21%	19%
Visited a fan website	18%	23%	17%	15%
Gone to websites with blogs about the book or author	18%	13%	15%	24%
Gone to a chat room or message board about the book	16%	12%	15%	20%
Gone to websites with podcasts about the book or author	16%	20%	13%	15%
Wrote my own online review of the book	10%	10%	11%	10%

Notes: Children age 5-8 were not asked about the full list of activities shown here. Forty-seven percent of online kids age 5-8 have engaged in at least one of the following activities: visited a book's, author's, or fan website, or looked on the Internet for a book by the same author or series.

Kids Extend the Reading Experience Online

- Among kids who extend the reading experience online, both girls and boys are learning what other people think about a book and are connecting with other readers.

Things Children Have Done or Experienced When Going Online after Reading a Book They Liked

	Online Reading Extenders		
	Total	Boys	Girls
	(201)	(91)	(110)
Learned what other people thought about the book	46%	48%	45%
Learned new things about the book or author	45%	48%	41%
Told my friends what I did or discovered online	43%	44%	42%
Connected with other readers and felt like I was part of a group	28%	30%	26%

Extending the Reading Experience Online Fuels Positive Reading Relationships

- Children who extend the reading experience online value reading, enjoy reading, and read books for fun far more than children who do not leverage the Internet to extend the book-reading experience.

	Total Online 9-17s (306)	Online Reading Extenders (201)	Online Non-Reading Extenders (105)
READING IMPORTANCE			
Say it is extremely or very important to read books for fun	62%	77%	36%
READING ENJOYMENT			
Degree to which enjoy reading books for fun: "love it" or "like it a lot"	60%	73%	38%
READING BEHAVIOR			
High Frequency Reader (read books for fun everyday)	20%	25%	12%
Read books for fun everyday/almost everyday	39%	50%	20%
THE "COOL" FACTOR			
Reading is cool	77%	84%	65%
I like to be the first of my friends to read new books	66%	77%	46%

Notes: In this analysis, Online Reading Extenders are compared to Online Non-Reading Extenders (that is, children age 9-17 who use the Internet, but have not participated in online activities related to extending the reading experience).

Eighty Percent of Kids Who Extend the Reading Experience Online Say They Will Always Want to Read Printed Books

- Online Reading Extenders are nearly five times more likely (50% vs. 11%) than their counterparts to have read a book on a computer or a handheld device, yet they are also far more likely to say “No matter what I can do online, I’ll always want to read books printed on paper” (80% vs. 57%).

	Total Online 9-17s (306)	Online Reading Extenders (201)	Online Non-Reading Extenders (105)
Have read a digital book in past year			
Have read a digital book (Net):	35%	50%	11%
Have read a book on a computer	29%	42%	8%
Have read a book on a handheld device	15%	20%	5%
Total agree			
No matter what I can do online, I’ll always want to read books printed on paper	71%	80%	57%

The Internet Can Be a Gateway to an Improved Reading Relationship

- Low frequency readers are poised to extend the reading experience online to spark a greater interest in reading.
- Half of low frequency readers go online every day.
- Low frequency readers are far more likely to say reading on the Internet is “better” than reading a printed book.
- Since teens and boys are disproportionately represented within the low frequency reader group, the Internet can serve as a gateway to developing a stronger reading relationship.

	Reading Frequency Groups among Kids Age 9-17		
	Total 9-17s	High Frequency Readers	Low Frequency Readers
	(343)	(84)	(85)
% who go online daily	44%	60%	49%
Think they would prefer to read...			
A printed book, OR	58%	68%	49%
A book on a handheld device	22%	13%	26%
A book on a computer	20%	19%	25%
When it might be better to read books and when it might be better to go online and read things on the Internet: Summary of Internet			
Read for fun	46%	33%	69%
Get a long-lasting understanding of things or topics you are interested in	51%	30%	70%
Read about people and characters that inspire you	50%	42%	63%
Become so involved in what you are reading that you lose track of time	43%	33%	49%
Read things that make you use your imagination	37%	26%	48%



IV. Parents' Role in Kids' Reading

Parents have a strong influence over kids' reading.

- Parents overwhelmingly view reading as the most important skill a child needs to develop; yet parents with older children believe this to a lesser degree.
- Eighty-two percent of parents say they wish their child would read more books for fun.
- Parents who read books for fun daily are six times more likely than low frequency reading parents to have kids who read for fun daily.
- Reading at home starts young for some, but not all, children. About half of all parents begin reading to their children before their first birthday.
- The percent of children who are read to daily drops from 38% among 5-8 year olds to 23% among 9-11 year olds – the same time when kids' daily reading for fun starts to decrease.
- Parents employ several tactics to encourage kids to read more, such as giving books as gifts, using movies or TV shows based on books, or encouraging kids to go online and extend the reading experience. Parents of high frequency readers employ more tactics than parents of low frequency readers.
- Parents are a key source of books suggestions for their children, yet nearly half of all parents say they have a hard time finding information about books their child would enjoy reading.

By a Wide Margin, Parents View “Strong Reading Skills” as the Most Important Skill Children Should Have

Most Important Skills for a Child to Have...

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL		TOP THREE MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS	
	Total Parents (501)		Total Parents (501)
Strong reading skills	41%	Strong reading skills	81%
			
Strong critical thinking skills	23%	Strong critical thinking skills	50%
Strong math skills	11%	Strong math skills	49%
Strong social skills	11%	Strong social skills	43%
Strong computer skills	7%	Strong writing skills	42%
Strong writing skills	6%	Strong computer skills	26%
Strong science skills	2%	Strong science skills	9%

Notes: These do not vary by a child's age or gender.

Parents Believe that Strong Reading Skills Pay Off – Yet Parents with Older Children Believe This to a Lesser Degree

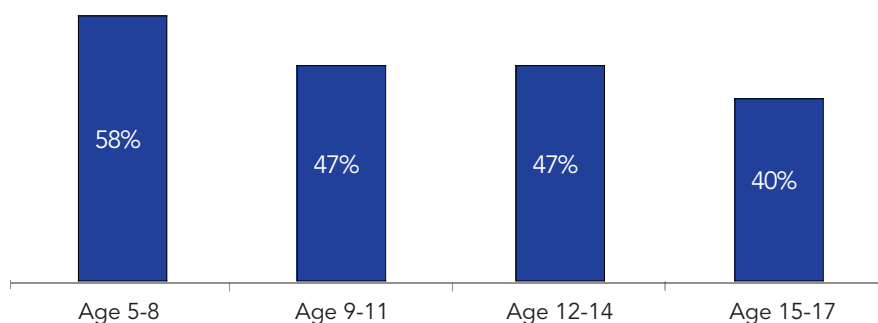
- With the exception of believing that kids need to be strong readers to get into a good college, fewer parents of children age 9-17, compared to those with children age 5-8, strongly agree with the sentiments listed.

Summary of Strongly Agree

	Total Parents	Parents of Child Age...			
		5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17
	(501)	(158)	(114)	(151)	(78)
Reading for fun helps my child do better in school	70%	79%	64%	70%	65%
My child needs to be a strong reader to get into a good college	67%	70%	68%	65%	63%
My child needs to be a strong reader to get a good job when he/she is older	65%	74%	61%	64%	56%
If children are not strong readers, things will be much harder for them when they are adults	64%	70%	58%	61%	64%

- Fifty-eight percent of parents with kids age 5-8 think it is extremely important for their children to read books for fun.
- This drops to just under half (47%) of parents of kids age 9-14 and drops again to 40% among parents of older teens.

Percent of Parents Who Say It Is “Extremely Important” for Their Child to Read Books for Fun



Notes: When ratings of “agree” are considered along with ratings of “strongly agree,” over 90% of parents of children of all ages and both genders agree with these statements.

The Relationship Is Clear: Parents Who Read Frequently Are More Likely to Have Kids Who Read Frequently

- High frequency reading parents are **six times more likely** than low frequency reading parents to have children who are high frequency readers (42% vs. 7%).

Parents Reading Frequency of Books for Fun

	Total Parents (501)	High (140)	Moderate (263)	Low (98)
Kids' Reading Frequency Group				
High	24%	42%	19%	7%
Moderate	54%	39%	65%	10%
Low	22%	19%	16%	43%

Notes: Parents' and children's reading frequency groups are defined in the same way: High = read books for fun every day, Moderate = read books for fun once a week to 4-6 times a week, Low = read books for fun < once a week. Thirty percent of parents are classified as high frequency readers, 52% as moderate frequency readers and 19% as low frequency readers.

Reading at Home Starts Young for Some, but Not All, Children

- Despite the fact that infancy is a crucial time for establishing language skills, only about half of all children were read to at home prior to age one.

Age at Which Child Was First Read To at Home

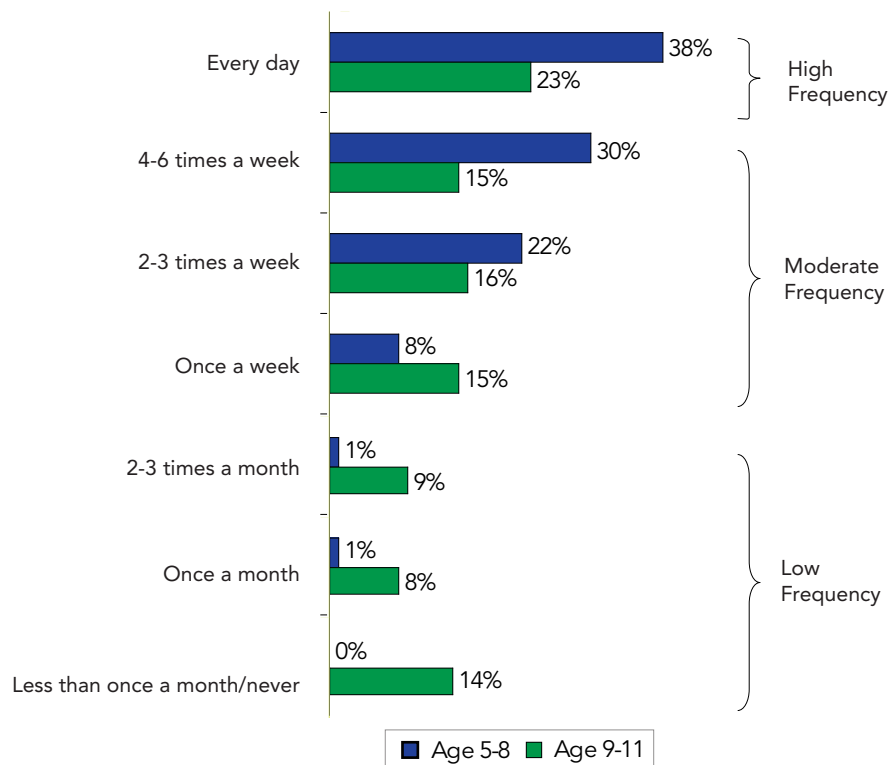
	Total Parents (501)
Under age 1	48%
Age 1	17%
Age 2	15%
Age 3-4	14%
Age 5 or older	5%
Child was never read to at home	1%
Average age	1.29

Frequency of Being Read To by a Family Member Drops Sharply after Age Eight

- Thirty-eight percent of 5-8 year olds are read to daily. This drops to 23% among children age 9-11.
- Thirty-one percent of children age 9-11 are read to (or with) less than once a week, with 14% being read to (or with) less than once a month or never.

Frequency of Parents or Other Family Members Reading Books to (or with) Child

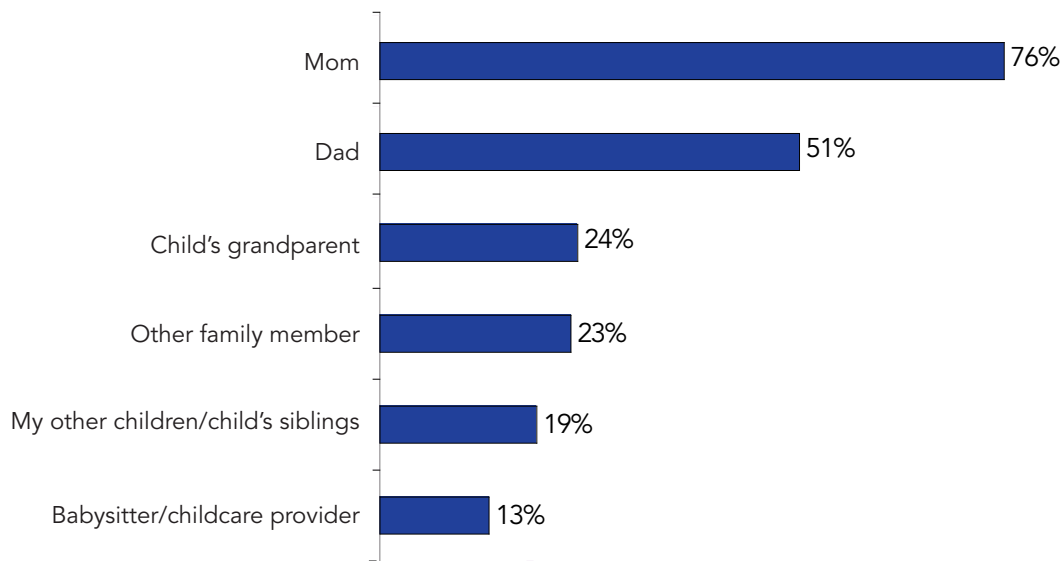
(Among Parents of Children Age 5-11)



	Total Age 5-11 (272)	Age 5-8 (158)	Age 9-11 (114)
High level of being read to/with	32%	38%	23%
Moderate level of being read to/with	54%	60%	46%
Low level of being read to/with	14%	2%	31%

Mom Is the Household Member Most Likely to Be Reading to (or with) Children at Home

People Who Read Books to (or with)
Child When They Are at Home
(Among Parents of Children Age 5-11)



Notes: Parents could choose as many as apply.

82% of Parents Wish Their Child Would Read More Books for Fun—Parents Use Many Tactics to Encourage Reading

- From ensuring access to books, to encouraging reading-related activities on a computer or other technology device, to rewarding children for reading books, parents have tried a wide variety of tactics to promote reading.

Things Parents Have Done in Relation to Their Child's Reading Habits

	Parents (501)
Give books to my child as gifts	68%
Always have a wide variety of books in my home available for my child	65%
Put limits on the amount of time he/she can spend watching TV, playing videogames, or using the computer	49%
Build reading into my child's daily routine or schedule	47%
Look for information on books so I can suggest books for my child to read that he/she will enjoy	43%
Use movies or TV shows that are based on books to get my child interested in a book	42%
Make sure my child does reading related activities or games on a computer or on other kinds of technology (like learning toys, educational videogames, etc.)	42%
Reward my child for reading books	40%
Read the same books as my child so I can talk with him/her about the books	39%
Have my child participate in book clubs or other reading groups that meet in person	31%
Encourage my child to go online and explore a book's website, an author's website, or other types of websites that extend the reading experience	26%

“I wish my child would read more books for fun.”

82%

Total Agree among Parents

Parents of High Frequency Readers Use More Tactics to Encourage Reading

- High frequency readers are far more likely to have parents who have tried a wider range of activities in relation to their reading habits – some of which center on more communication about and interaction with books.

Things Parents Have Done in Relation to Their Child's Reading Habits

(Items that show a difference between High and Low Frequency Readers are shown)

	Parents of...	
	High Frequency Readers (140)	Low Frequency Readers (98)
Give books to my child as gifts	74%	55%
Build reading into my child's daily routine or schedule	61%	33%
Read the same books as my child so I can talk with him/her about the books	53%	28%
Reward my child for reading books	49%	29%
Have my child participate in book clubs or other reading groups that meet in person	49%	20%
Use movies or TV shows that are based on books to get my child interested in a book	42%	55%
Encourage my child to go online and explore a book's website, an author's website, or other types of websites that extend the reading experience	34%	22%
Average number of strategies used:	5.7	4.0

Many Parents Need Help in Finding Information about Books for Their Children

- Regardless of parents' past or current attempts to promote reading, they cannot effectively put books into their child's hands if they cannot find information on which books to suggest.
 - Nearly half (47%) say they have a hard time finding information about books their child would enjoy reading.
- About 40% of parents – higher among those with older teens at just over 50% – hold the belief that there simply are not enough really good books out there for kids of their child's age and gender.

“I have a hard time finding information about books my child would enjoy reading.”

47%

Total Agree among Parents

“There aren't enough really good books for boys/girls my child's age.”

41%

Total Agree among Parents

	Parents of Child Age...				
	Total Parents	5-8	9-11	12-14	15-17
	(501)	(158)	(114)	(151)	(78)
Total Agree: I have a hard time finding information about books my child would enjoy reading	47%	41%	39%	46%	62%
Total Agree: There aren't enough really good books for boys/girls my child's age	41%	36%	35%	41%	52%

Notes: Parents were asked about the gender of the child participating in the study.

V. Harry Potter: The Power of One Series

Harry Potter continues to motivate young readers and is poised to become a classic.

- Three in four kids say reading Harry Potter, or having someone read Harry Potter to them, has made them interested in reading other books.
- Two-thirds of kids say they do better in school since reading Harry Potter and their parents agree.
- Three in ten readers of Harry Potter say they do not believe the series is really over, and four in ten are hoping for more books from J.K. Rowling.
- Three in four children who read Harry Potter say they will always be a Harry Potter fan, and they plan on keeping their books into adulthood.
- Seventy-four percent of all parents believe that the Harry Potter series will be read by future generations.

More Than Six in Ten Kids Age Nine and Older Have Read Harry Potter

- Despite weaker reading relationships, boys are as likely as girls to have read Harry Potter, be interested in reading (or re-reading) Harry Potter, and even to have read all seven Harry Potter books.
- Interest in reading Harry Potter is strong among kids of all ages and parents.

Harry Potter Readership and Interest among Children

	Total Kids	Age 5-8	Age 9-11	Age 12-14	Age 15-17	Boys	Girls
	(501)	(158)	(114)	(151)	(78)	(250)	(251)
Have read Harry Potter	58%	45%	63%	62%	65%	59%	57%
Read all seven Harry Potter books by myself	19%	8%	16%	18%	36%	19%	19%
Extremely/Very interested in reading/re-reading Harry Potter	67%	64%	73%	65%	65%	68%	65%

Harry Potter Readership and Interest among Parents

	Total Parents
	(501)
Read Harry Potter for self or to child	43%
Read Harry Potter for self	31%
Read all seven Harry Potter books for self	16%
Extremely/Very interested in reading/re-reading Harry Potter	61%

Harry Potter Promotes Interest in Reading and Enjoyment of Reading

- Three in four Harry Potter readers say reading Harry Potter has made them more interested in reading other books – and parents agree.

Total Agree with Statements about Harry Potter

Kids Who Read Harry Potter	
(291)	
Kids' agreement with statements:	
Reading Harry Potter has made me interested in reading other books	74%
I didn't read books for fun before I started reading Harry Potter	47%

Parents of Kids Who Read Harry Potter	
(242)	
Parents' agreement with statements:	
Reading Harry Potter has helped my child enjoy reading more	81%
Reading Harry Potter has made my child interested in reading other books	79%
Before reading Harry Potter, my child didn't enjoy reading for fun	43%

Notes: Kids who read Harry Potter are those children who have read any Harry Potter book on their own or had a Harry Potter book read to them by a parent. Parents of kids who have read Harry Potter are parents who have read Harry Potter to their child or know their child has read Harry Potter on their own.

Harry Potter Readers – Especially Children Who Have Read All Seven Books – Are More Passionate about Reading

	All Kids	Read Harry Potter	Did Not Read Harry Potter	Read All Seven Harry Potter Books
	(501)	(291)	(210)	(84)
"Love" or "like" reading for fun "a lot"	67%	71%	62%	84%
Agree to statement: Reading is cool	79%	84%	73%	93%
Agree to statement: I like to be the first of my friends to read new books	72%	77%	65%	82%

Notes: Kids who read Harry Potter are those children who read any Harry Potter book on their own or had a Harry Potter book read to them by a parent.

Harry Potter Readers Continue to Reap Academic Rewards – and Parents Agree

Total Agree with Statements about Harry Potter

Kids Who Read
Harry Potter

(291)

Agreement with statements among kids who have read Harry Potter:

Since reading Harry Potter, I have more confidence in my reading ability	69%
I've been doing better in school since I started reading Harry Potter books	63%

Parents of Kids Who
Read Harry Potter

(242)

Agreement with statements among parents with kids who have read Harry Potter:

Since reading Harry Potter, my child has more confidence in his/her reading ability	70%
Reading Harry Potter has helped my child in school	66%

Notes: Kids who read Harry Potter are those children who have read any Harry Potter book on their own or had a Harry Potter book read to them by a parent. Parents of kids who have read Harry Potter are parents who have read Harry Potter to their child or know their child has read Harry Potter on their own.

Harry Potter Brings Parents and Children Together

- Seventy-eight percent of parents who have read Harry Potter say they “really enjoy sharing Harry Potter books” with their child.

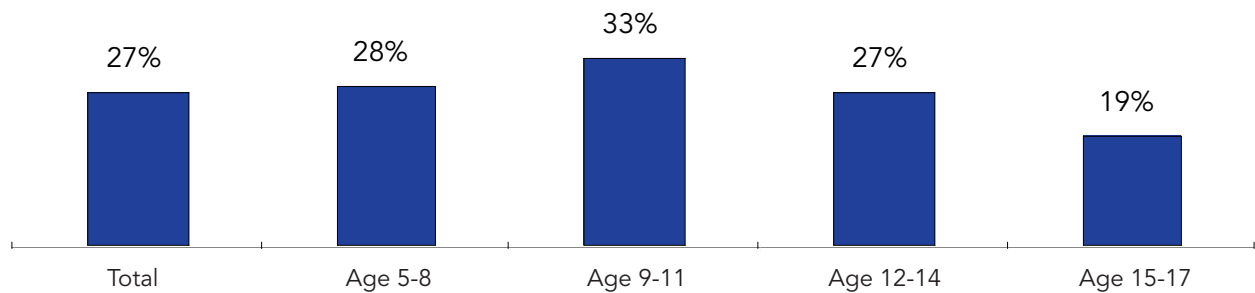
“I really enjoy sharing Harry Potter books with my child.”

78%

Total Agree among Parents Who Are Harry Potter Readers

- About one in four (27%) of all parents have read a Harry Potter book to (or with) their child. This is highest among parents of children age 9-11, the age when reading typically declines.

Percent of Parents Who Have Read Harry Potter to (or with) Their Child

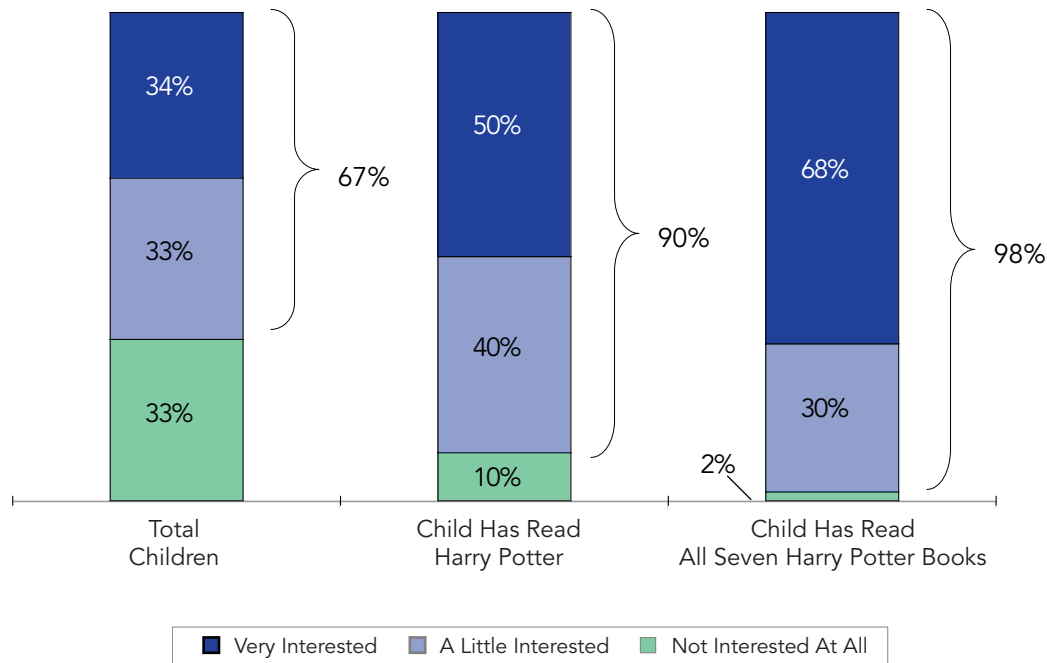


Notes: Parents who have read Harry Potter include the 43% of parents who have read Harry Potter for themselves or “to or with” their child.

Among Kids Who Have Read Harry Potter, Nearly All Are Interested in Re-Reading Harry Potter Books

- Ninety percent of kids who have read at least one Harry Potter book and 98% of children who have read all seven Harry Potter books are at least “a little” interested in re-reading Harry Potter books in the future.
- Nearly seven in ten children who have read the entire Harry Potter series say they are “very” interested in re-reading Harry Potter books.

Interest in Reading or Re-Reading
Harry Potter Books in the Future

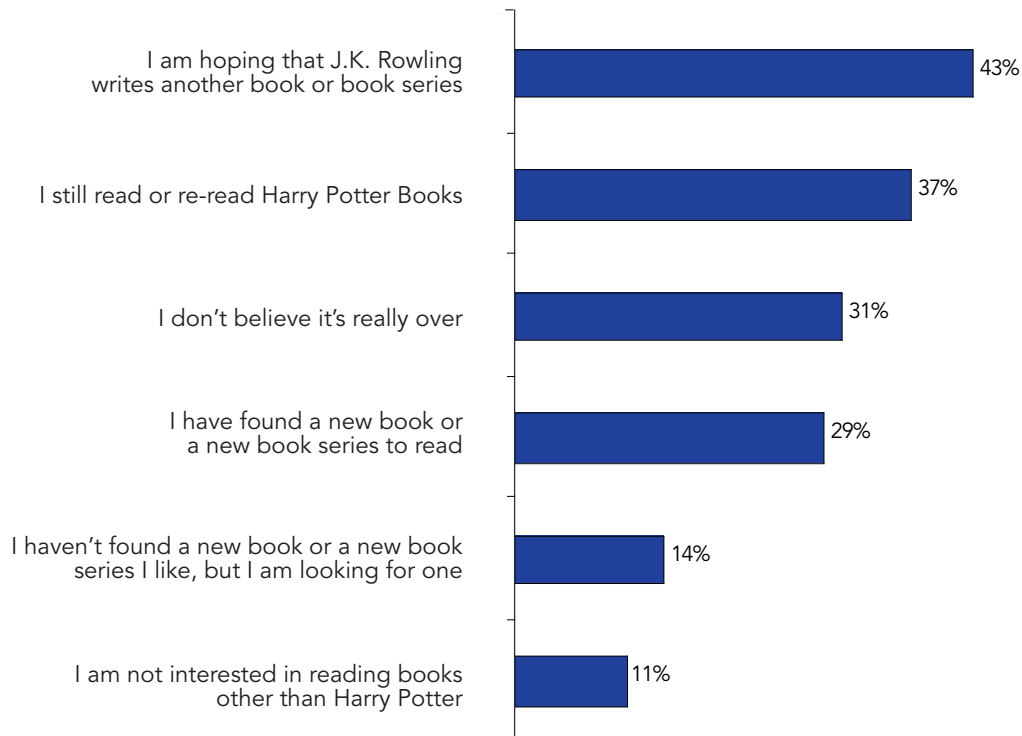


Harry Potter Readers Want More!

- Thirty-one percent of kids do not believe the series is really over!
- Forty-three percent are hoping that J.K. Rowling writes another book or book series.

Things That Describe Harry Potter Readers Now That the Series Is Over

(Among Kids Who Say They Have Read Harry Potter or Someone Has Read Harry Potter to Them)



- Among kids who have read all seven Harry Potter books, **nearly two in three** hope J.K. Rowling writes another book or book series.

“I am hoping that J.K. Rowling writes another book or book series.”

64%

Total Agree among Kids Who Have Read All Seven Harry Potter Books

Harry Potter Is Poised to Become a Children's Classic

Percent of parents who think the Harry Potter series will end up being read by future generations:

77%
Total Agree among Parents

89%
Total Agree among Parents
Who Have Read Harry Potter

Total Agree with Statements

Kids Who Have Read Harry Potter (291)	
Agreement with statements among kids who have read Harry Potter:	
Even though the Harry Potter series is over, I'll always be a Harry Potter fan	75%
I'll always keep my Harry Potter books, even when I'm grown-up/an adult	73%
Harry Potter books are my favorite books	69%

APPENDIX

APPENDIX: Research Objectives

- As a leader in children's literacy, Scholastic seeks to provide insights to the public on attitudes and behaviors of children and parents related to reading in the 21st century.
- The primary objectives for the research were:
 - Examine the interaction between reading and technology in terms of attitudes and actual behaviors.
 - Explore the characteristics of children who are engaged with reading and those who are not in terms of their attitudes and behaviors and the attitudes and behaviors of their parents.
 - Uncover the obstacles that seem to prevent children from forming a meaningful relationship with reading and find potential ways to overcome those obstacles.
- To this end, the data were analyzed by the following key characteristics:
 - Age and gender of child
 - Child and parent reading attitudes
 - Child and parent reading frequency
 - Child and parent online usage
 - Child online behavior: whether they extend the reading experience online
 - Child reasons for not reading more: have trouble finding books they like
- Terms used in this report include:
 - "Tweens" – kids age 9-11
 - Young teens – kids age 12-14
 - Older teens – kids age 15-17

APPENDIX: Methodology

- The study was conducted by TSC, a division of Yankelovich, and interviews were held from January 17 through February 17, 2008 with 1,002 individuals as follows:
 - 501 children age 5-17 and their parents/primary guardians from 25 major cities across the U.S.
- Parents/primary guardians were recruited via mall-intercept and were screened to meet the following criteria:
 - Have at least one child age 5-17 present during the time of the intercept at the mall.
 - Be related to the child either as parent, grandparent, or caretaker.
- Upon eligibility, the parent or primary guardian completed the survey using a computer.
 - Children age 5-8 (and others as necessary) were read the survey by professional interviewers and asked to answer; all other children completed the survey themselves using a computer.
 - Some language was modified in age-appropriate ways in order to ensure comprehension among kids age 5-8. These instances are noted throughout the report.
- The final data were weighted by the following variables according to information from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Current Population Survey:
 - Region
 - Race
 - Child's age and gender
 - Household income
- Significance testing between groups has been done at the 90% confidence level.
 - Statistically significant differences are shown by boxing results, according to which group is of particular interest.
 - Boxed numbers are indicative of a statistically higher (or lower) result when compared to the lowest (or highest) percent shown in a given row. A boxed number is not necessarily indicative of statistical significance against all numbers in a row.
- Percents may not add to 100% due to rounding.
- Bases shown on tables are unweighted sample sizes.

APPENDIX: Sample Overview*

CHILDREN'S AGE GROUPS

5-8	31%
9-11	22%
12-14	23%
15-17	24%

CHILD'S GENDER

Male	51%
Female	49%

RACE

Caucasian	64%
African American	15%
Hispanic Origin/Descent	20%
Asian	1%
Other	1%

PARENTS' MARITAL STATUS

Married/Unmarried & Living Together	72%
Never Married	11%
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	17%

PARENT/GUARDIAN RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD

Mom	75%
Dad	25%
Other	2%

PARENTS' AGE

Under 25	3%
25-34	28%
35-44	47%
45-54	19%
55+	3%
<i>Average Age of Parent:</i>	38

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Under \$50K	47%
\$50K +	53%
<i>Average Household Income</i>	\$58K
<i>Median Household Income</i>	\$53K

EMPLOYED PARENTS

	78%
Full Time	66%
Part time	12%

PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Less Than Some College	30%
Some College or More	70%

*Total kids sample (n = 501)

For a downloadable version of this report, visit:
www.scholastic.com/readingreport









Yankelovich